

Appl. No.09/391,294
Amdt. Dated September 29, 2006
Reply to Office Action dated November 21, 2006

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REMARKS

After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-10 are pending in the application.

The Office Action of November 21, 2007 has been received and carefully considered. As a result this Amendment is being submitted. It is submitted that, as a result of this action, all bases of rejection and objection are traversed and overcome. Reconsideration is, therefore, respectfully requested.

At the outset, the Examiner indicates that the reissue oath/declaration is defective because claims have been added and/or amended since the filing of the declaration. As such, the Examiner concludes that the declaration fails to address the alleged defects or errors corrected by the most recent amendment. The Examiner has requested a supplemental Reissue Declaration be filed before any claims can be allowed. Accordingly, Claims 1-10 currently stand rejected as being based on a defective reissue declaration under 35 U.S.C. 251. The Examiner has indicated that receipt of an appropriate oath/declaration would overcome this rejection. The Examiner has indicated that the supplemental oath should contain language such as the following: "Every error in the patent which was corrected in the reissue application, and was not covered by a prior oath/declaration submitted in this application, arose without any deceptive intention in the part of the applicant(s)." This language has been added to the Supplemental Declaration that is being submitted with this Amendment. It is submitted that in view of this action claims 1-10 are now allowable under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 251. The Declaration is submitted with two signature pages, one bearing the signature of co-inventor Richard Wilson, and the other bearing the signature of Patrick Culpepper as co-inventor and as company president.

Claims 5 and 10 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by French patent 572, 198. The Examiner indicates that the French reference at Fig 1 provides a single member having each of the claimed features. Claims 5 and 10 have been amended by this action to specify that the flanges project continuously from the inner surface of the first and second portions. Support for this amendment is found in the drawings at Fig. 1. Claim 10 also includes the element that the flanges form a detent with the outer face of the first and second portions. Support for this is found in the drawings at Fig. 1. It is submitted that the French reference fails to teach or suggest a flange so oriented. For this reason, it is submitted that the

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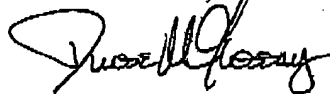
Applicants invention as set forth in claims 5 and 10 is not taught, anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited references.

It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment traverses and overcomes all of the Examiner's objections and rejections to the application as originally filed. It is further submitted that this Amendment has antecedent basis in the application as originally filed, including the specification, claims and drawings, and that this Amendment does not add any new subject matter to the application. Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment places the application in suitable condition for allowance; notice of which is requested.

If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present application can be expedited by way of an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG, BASILE, HANLON, MacFARLANE, WOOD &
HELMHOLDT, P.C.



Denise M. Glassmeyer
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 31831
(248) 649-3333

3001 West Big Beaver Rd., Suite 624
Troy, Michigan 48084-3107

Dated: February 21, 2007
DMG/ljo